

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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RSR-01 /146 W

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R 200837Z AUG 73

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7961

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 8362

CINAPCAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: INFO, CH

SUBJECT: RED GUARDS COMMEMORATED

SUMMARY. PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLES ABOUT THE RED GUARDS MAY SIMPLY BE THEIR DUE AS ONE OF THE MASS ORGANIZATIONS BEING REBUILT. THE ARTICLES RE-RAISE THE ISSUE OF THE EXTREMIST "516" GROUP, POSSIBLY FORESHADOWING AN EXPOSE LINKED TO THE LIN PIAO AFFAIR. END SUMMARY.

1. PEOPLE'S DAILY AUGUST 18 PUBLISHED THREE ARTICLES MARKING THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF MAO'S FIRST RECEPTION OF RED GUARDS. FULL TEXTS ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE HERE, AND WE HAZARD THE FOLLOWING TENTATIVE COMMENTS ON THE BASIS OF NNNA'S REPORT OF THIS UNUSUAL EVENT.

2. THE SIMPLEST EXPLANATION FOR THE ARTICLES IS THAT THE RED GUARDS ARE AMONG THE MASS ORGANIZATIONS WHICH ARE TO BE

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"CONSOLIDATED" THIS YEAR, AND THE REGIME EARLIER HAS MADE WOMEN,

THE COMMUNIST YOUTH LEAGUE, AND THE TRADE UNIONS  
THE SUBJECTS OF TOP LEVEL MEDIA PRONOUNCEMENTS. WHILE  
WE HAVE SEEN NO SIGNS OF ACTIVITIES TO  
REBUILD THE RED GUARDS ON THE SCALE THAT OTHER MASS ORGANIZATIONS  
ARE BEING RECONSTRUCTED, THEY PRESUMABLY ARE DUE SOME KIND OF  
COMMEMORATION ALSO.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, THESE ARTICLES PROBABLY SHOULD BE READ PARTLY  
IN THE LIGHT OF RED FLAG'S RECENT REPUDIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY  
ENROLLMENT EXAMINATION, WHICH CARRIED THE POINTED REMINDER THAT  
THE RED GUARDS STORMED THE UNIVERSITIES EARLY IN THE CULTURAL  
REVOLUTION (HONG KONG 8067). WITH THAT IN MIND, HOWEVER, THE  
PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLES (AS GLOSSED BY NCNA) CONVEY NO CLEAR  
SIGNAL THAT THE RED GUARDS ARE OF ANY GREAT CONSEQUENCE AS A  
POLITICAL FORCE TODAY. RATHER, THE PRESENT DAY RED GUARDS ARE  
PUMOCRAYED OUT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, INTEGRATING WITH THE PEASANTS  
AND RECEIVING REEDUCATION. "FORMER RED GURADS" ARE SAID TO BE  
ACTIVE IN THE "CURRENT REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION," BUT FROM NCNA'S  
ACCOUNT THE IMPLICATION WOULD BE THAT THEY ARE WORKING FROM THE  
INSIDE ON EDUCATION POLICY, NOT STORMING OR CHAFFING FROM THE  
OUTSIDE.

4. THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE ARTICLES IS THE RECAP OF HOW THE RED  
GUARD'S COPYBOOK WAS BLOTTED BY EXTREMISM. AND HERE THERE IS A  
RARE MENTION OF THE MYSTERIOUS "516" EXTREMIST GROUPS. (THE ONLY  
PREVIOUS MENTION OF THIS GROUP IN OFFICIAL MEDIA SINCE THE  
CULTURAL REVOLUTION WAS IN RED FLAG IN SEPTEMBER 1971 IN CONNECTION  
WITH EDUCATIONAL REFORM (HONG KONG 5902, SEPT 7, 1971). IT  
SEEMED AT THE TIME THAT A PUBLIC EXPOSE ON THE "516" MIGHT BE  
FORTHCOMING, BUT THN THE LIN PIAO AFFAIR ERUPTED AND NOTHING  
FURTHER WAS HEARD ABOUT THIS GROUP.) THIS PRESENT COMMENT ON THE  
"516" ADDS THE NEW, BUT UNSURPRISING, WRINKLE OF LINKING THE GROUP  
WITH THE "POLITICAL SWINDLERS" (PRESUMABLY MEANING LIN AND CHEN  
PO-TA). IT IS NOTWEORTHY THAT THE "516" IS CONNECTED HERE WITH A  
PURPORTED ATTEMPT TO "STIR UP REACTIONARY IDEOLOGICAL TRENDS."  
NCNA SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE "516" BEING ULTRALEFTIST.

5. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE RE-RAISING OF THE "516" AT THIS TIME  
REFLECTS FURTHER PREPARATIONS TO EXPLAIN THE GROUP PUBLICLY,  
POSSIBLY IN A REPORT ON LIN AND CHEN. HOWEVER, CHIANG CHING AND  
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OTHER SURVIVING RADICALS HAD MORE THAN A NODDING ACQUAINTANCE  
WITH THE "516" LEADERS, WHO WERE PROMINENT FIGURES IN THEIR  
CULTURAL REVOLUTION GROUP BEFORE BEING PURGED. EVEN IF THE GROUP  
IS NOW TO BE PINNED TO LIN AND CHEN, THE VERY RAISING OF THE "516"  
AFFAIR IS SENSITIVE BUSINESS.

6. THE THOUGHT OCCURS THAT THE RED GUARD COMMEMORATION COULD  
BE RELATED TO A NATIONAL YOUTH CONGRESS, BUT WE NOTE AFP REPORTS

FROM PEKING THAT THE AGES OF THOSE INVOLVED WOULD ARGUE AGAINST  
THIS AS THE EXPLANATION FOR THE PRESENT ACTIVITIES AT THE GREAT  
HALL.  
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